The Meteorological Office

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THAI MET. DEPARTMENT IMPLEMENTS WORLD LEADING FORECASTING SYSTEM

The Meteorological Department (TMD) of the Government of Thailand has become a leading global force in meteorology. The installation of the new Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) system, one of the most advanced systems of its kind in the world, will greatly enhance TMD's forecasting capability. The new system, using state-of-the-art meteorological software from The Met. Office in the United Kingdom and computer technology from IBM will provide enormous benefits for the people and economy of Thailand.

The NWP system was developed to support Government initiatives to enhance the existing weather forecasting system. The Thai Government realised that improved weather forecasts could reduce the loss of life and destruction to property from severe weather, and bring economic benefits for the country from more accurate weather information.

The prime contractor, Technology Operation Group (TOP) Co. Ltd of Bankok, has incorporated world-class components from a number of suppliers into the NWP system. The Met. Office was responsible for the supply of individual components of meteorological software for TOP including:

- The Unified Model - a very large computer modelling program that processes observations of weather and previous forecasts to estimate present conditions, and creates forecasts of future weather. Developed in the UK, a similar version is used to produce all UK Met. Office forecasts, including those where it acts as one of the two World Aviation Centres.
- HORACE graphical system - a world leading display system for forecasters that processes Unified Model output and produces graphical information for interpretation.
- Automatic Observing Systems - the provision and siting of ten specialist automatic meteorological observing stations, in the Bangkok area, to support the system.
- Training of TMD personnel to make best use of all aspects of the NWP system.

Accurate weather forecast information is of vital importance to daily life all over the world. It has significant impact on public safety, defence of nations, decision making of politicians, and the profitability of businesses. As countries seek to achieve the benefits from the use of high quality weather forecast information, there is a growing demand for the UK Met. Office to supply meteorological consultancy services to countries around the world, stemming from its internationally recognised expertise. For example, The United States Air Force has recently purchased a HORACE system as part of a package, including software and data supply, to provide main support for their operational weather services in Europe.

Alan Douglas, Commercial Director of The Met. Office said, "The Thai Meteorological Department has been highly innovative in sourcing world-leading components to enhance their forecasting capability, including forecasting systems from The Met. Office. Therefore, Thailand now has one of the most advanced weather forecasting systems in the world. "

Teerachi Riensubdee, President of the TOP Group , said "This system, when completed, will enhance the accuracy of weather forecasts for Thailand and in the region of Southern Asia, to a level not previously experienced and be beneficial to the daily lives of people living in this region and especially to the Thai people. The system, which will provide earlier and more detailed warnings of potential weather disasters leading to increased safety of the public, will also bring a great economic impact that is far beyond current expectations "

Peter Trevelyan, Project Manager at The Met. Office said, "Accurate weather forecast information can provide significant benefits. The development of a world-leading forecast system by The Thai Meteorological Department will save many lives and considerable money as the impact of flooding is reduced."

Notes:

- The Met. Office, with responsibility for the supply of meteorological software systems, worked as a sub-contractor for Technology Operation Group Co. Ltd of Bangkok.
- Overall responsibility for the NWP project was with the prime contractor, the Technology Operation Group Co. Ltd of Bangkok, working for The Meteorological Department (TMD) of the Government of Thailand. The contract commenced on 17 July 1996.

Press Information

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